لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

August 1964

EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD

M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India. He declared that God had conferred upon him the dignity of Prophethood. He claimed that he had received this blessing through being a perfect follower of the Holy Prophet. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the Expected Messenger of all the religions of the world. He explained that God had raised him for the purpose of re-establishing the dominion of Islam and to shed light upon the true teachings of the Holy Quran. With him, in fact, had started a new era, the Renaissance of Islam.

One startling historical disclosure he made, was that Jesus Christ had escaped death at the crucifixion and had subsequently travelled to Kashmir, where his tomb still exists at Srinagar.

When Hazrat Ahmad published his claims and the revelations received by him, he encountered a severe storm of opposition from all quarters and all communities. In spite of this opposition God began to strengthen his voice and people began to follow him. At the time of his death in 1908, he had gathered around him a group of faithful and staunch followers, not only in India but also in other countries, numbering hundreds of thousands.

After his death in 1908, he was succeeded by the Late Hazrat Maulvi Nuruddin Sahib as his First Khalifa. At his death in 1914, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, was elected as his second Khalifa.

He particularly undertook a vast programme of the propagation of Islam, and under his guidance, the Movement is carrying on vigorous missionary activities throughout the world. There is now a network of Ahmadiyya missions in almost every free country.

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This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept any responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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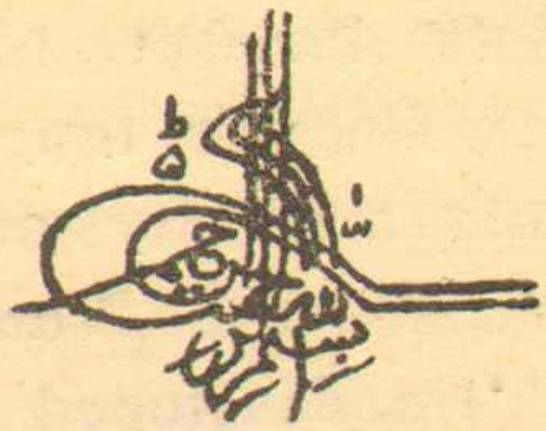

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Soul's Experiences Outside the Body

Mr. Bashir Ahmad Orchard

The spiritual wayfarer who thirsts for celestial experience constantly yearns for a more comprehensive vision of the supernatural. He knows that his mortal body came from the dust and there it must return; but he also knows that within there dwells an ethereal entity which is the real self. It possesses consciousness and is known as the soul which some call the ego, the spirit or some other name.

Regarding the creation of the soul in man the Holy Quran says:

> "Verily We created man from an extract of clay; then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository; then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators." (23 : 13-15)

The verses of the Holy Quran are deep in meaning and often the translators have difficulty in rendering a concise translation of

the original Arabic in which language the Quran was revealed. In this age God has raised the Promised Messiah whose advent was foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and by other prophets. Since the time of the Prophet of Islam there has arisen no greater authority on the Holy Quran than Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah. He has explained that the words 'He developed it into another creation' refers to the creation of the soul and that it grows within the body during the period of gestation in the womb of the mother.

As long as the body is animated with the breath of life, however faint it may be, there exists an inalienable connexion between the soul and the body. There are occasions when the soul escapes from the body and takes flight in the astral realms while life is still present in the body; but even so its connexion with the body is not completely severed. The space craft escapes from the atmosphere of the earth and in the silent sea of space seems to be entirely free of this planet; but such is not the case for both are united by an unbroken and intangible radio link. This invisible connexion can bring the space ship back to earth. Likewise there exists a mysterious link between the body and the wandering soul which has the power to draw back the latter to its mortal home.

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Regarding the flight of soul from the body the Holy Quran states;

> "Allah takes away the souls of human beings at the time of their death; and during their sleep of those also that are not yet dead. And then He retains those against which He has decreed death, and sends back the others till an appointed term. In that surely are signs for a people who reflect." (39:43)

This verse affirms that the soul can and does quit the body of an individual even while life is present; but its absence is only temporary. It takes permanent leave of the body only at the time of death. Every now and again one hears and reads of persons 'returning to life' after they have been certified dead by a doctor. The writer has talked with one such person. The truth is that they only appeared to be dead while an imperceptible

ble pulsation of life lingered on to be reinvigorated by some unknown force.

Testimonies of Experience

The separation of the soul from the physical body is not an uncommon experience in individuals before death. There are numerous instances on record in which people have reported the experience of having had an external view of their bodies from a point in mid air. This occurrence usually occurs during a state of sleep, trance or unconsciousness. Sometimes the soul seems to move further afield and witnesses occurrences in far off places. The soul of the greatest of all the Prophets - The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him) was once transported to the regions of paradise while his body comfortably reposed in sleep.

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Here are extracts from the statement of a soldier which appeared in the Journal of the Society of Psychical Research :

"I was stationed in Aden in 1913 and was seriously ill with dysentery. I got to the stage of having to be lifted from side to side, as I was too weak to move myself in bed.

"Shortly afterwards I found myself lying parellel to the bed, about four or five feet above it and face downwards. Below me I saw my body and witnessed the giving of a rectal injection. I listened to all the conversation of the two orderlies and of a strange M.O. who was directing affairs and was indeed a very interested spectator of the whole business.

"I found myself back in bed feeling much better. I told my story to the orderlies who were quite sceptical. I particularly enquired about the strange M.O. . I found there had been one; he was on route for Bombay, I think, and had called at the hospital in time to help. I never saw him again.

"I have always been convinced that my spirit

(or soul if you will) had actually left my body but returned as a result of the injection.
"The orderlies said I could'nt possibly have any knowledge of the matter as I was quite unconscious before and after the operation."

Another case is the boyhood experience of the Rev. Richard Zenor, of the Agasha Temple of Wisdom in Los Angeles which has been described by James Greenshaw in his book, 'Telephone Between worlds.'

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"He had been put to sleep for an afternoon nap, and he slept soundly, but after he had awakened he told his mother with naive candour that he had 'gone out of the window' from the bedroom and had taken his dog with him into town (five miles away) to be with his father. He then reported in detail his father's activities. At dinner time, Richard's father started to give his own report of the day's happenings, but he was interrupted by his wife's declaration that she already knew what he had been doing. To prove it, she told him in the same detail given to her earlier by the young boy. The father was naturally astonished.

"His invisible astral body and ego had left his physical outer shell during sleep and had travelled with the dog to see his father."

The following is an abbreviated account of an experience related by Mr. F.S. Smythe, the mountaineer, in his book 'The Spirit of the Hills.'

"In another moment I was sliding down the slabs, at first on my side, then on my back, driving my heels, elbows, forearm and palms of my hands against the rocks in an endeavour to stop myself. For 10 or 12 feet I slid thus, then shot over the edge of the precipice.

"I remember no jerk, but found myself hanging on the rope a few feet below the crest of the

ridge. I turned, snatched at the rocks and clawed my way back to the ridge.

"So much for events. I will now describe in detail my feelings from the moment when danger intervened to the moment when I found myself oscillating on the rope against the face of the precipice.

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"...the certainty which existed in my mind that nothing could help me falling and that I was to be killed, is interesting and important. Nevertheless, even though I had assumed thus early that I was as good as dead, I made desperate attempts to stop myself, as I have already described. During the time I was doing this, a curious rigidity or tension gripped my whole mental and physical being. So great was this tension that it swamped all pain and fear, and rendered me insensible to bumps and blows. It was an overwhelming sensation and quite outside my experience.

"Then suddenly this feeling was superseded by a feeling of complete indifference and detachment, indifference to what happened to my body, detachment from what was happening or likely to happen to that body. I seemed to stand aside from my body. I was not falling, for the reason that I was not in a dimension where it was possible to fall. I, that is my consciousness, was apart from my body, and not in the least concerned with what was befalling it.

A pious and most respected member of the Ahmadiyya Movement once related to the writer a vision in which he observed something happening in a far distant place. Once in a dream the writer had the experience of gazing down upon his own dead body lying peacfully on a bed; but it was an event of some future decade because the face had a much older appearance.

Value of Experiences

These few cases illustrate the fact that the soul has the

capacity of consciously operating outside the body; and when this is understood and accepted through conviction or experiene it strengthens ones' belief in the future life; and it should be known that belief in the next life is a cardinal doctrine of Islam. Conviction and experience of spiritual truths strengthens one's faith and at the same time enables one to preach with greater confidence and expound delicate truths with greater clarity.

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Visualising the soul as a separate identity to the body is an excellent spiritual exercise. One becomes more conscious of its presence, nature and mode of operation; one sees the transient structure of the human body and knows without fear that it must return to the dust from whence it came. One's mind becomes focussed on the real self; and the development of this self becomes the most fascinating and foremost ambition in one's life.

The healthy soul is coloured with the tint of holy thoughts as the sea is coloured with the blue of the sky on a sunny day.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Nature - Worship

Ch. Abdus Salam Akhtar M.A.

Those who believe in the conquest of nature have an argument based on pure scientific materialism. They say, nature behaves as it did millions of years ago ; its laws are the same as before, and its method remains unchanged. The mystery, therefore, which lies enshrined in the undiscovered reaches of nature, has to be explained in terms of matter and energy. To them, nature is a self-autonomous mechanism working its way blindly under rigid laws of matter and form. Thus Ernst Haeckel, Professor of Zoology in the University of Jena (Germany) wrote years ago :

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> "Since Darwin gave us the key to the monistic explanation of organisation in his theory of selection 40 years ago, it has become possible for us to trace the splendid variety of orderly tendencies of the organic world to mechanical, natural causes, just as we could, formerly in the inorganic world alone. Hence the supernatural and the telic forces to which the scientist had recourse, have been rendered superfluous".[1]

Such an explanation as this, tends us to think, that nature perhaps is a pure mechanism just like any automatic machine. But is nature really so ?

Is Nature pure mechanism ?

Readers would have calculated the point of view of the scientists from the above extract, but even among the scientists, there is a marked division. The latest speculation in this centurey, centres round the idea that nature is not a mere automaton, a self-working machine, but it has a Principle working it. Its movements can no doubt be tabulated, but they are also a manifestation of a working Mind. Sir James Jeans says that God must be a great mathematician, for He has worked out a most elaborate system of cuases and effects in nature. A more recent example, that nature has a Purpose, or that it is a teleological system, comes

from Lawrence Henderson, who has published a very authoritative work on the order of Nature. He writes :

> "It seems to me clearly established in the history of thought, that when this problem, that of order of nature arises, the only safety is to be found in retreat, and in employing the vaguest possible term, which can be imagined, from which all implications of design or purpose have been eliminated. By common consent that term has come to be recognised as Teleology".[2]

Again we read in Robert Clark :

> "More and more to-day we turn to nature in order to discover the problems that are capable of solution, and again and again we discover, that nature has provided a model, which gives us more than a hint as to how our problems can be solved. Often, of coarse, men have made inventions, and have only later realized that the same methods were employed in nature. Yet the existence of the devices in nature has equally often been, the spur to new advances and new discoveries".[3]

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A closer observation would make it clear that, nature, though working under uniform laws, is not a machine through and through. It denotes another element. The idea that man learns by it, is guided and instructed by its ways and methods, also invokes in us, an appreciation of the way it is controlled and run by a superior power.

An interesting example as to how the course of nature works under a pre-thought plan, is produced by history, when the prophet Moses and the army of Pharaoh both attempted to cross the channel, (the river Nile). When Moses reached the bed of the river, the current was in the process of flowing back, so the prophet and his companions safely waded through it. But the Pharaohs' army following the track, got involved when the water was rising. Apparently the course of nature was mechanical and calculable, but one could also feel, that there was something behind this all, a "Will" that worked through the laws of nature.

Yet another example is given by the Holy Quran, when 'Abraha', the Christian Viceroy in Yeman, of the King of Abbysinia intended to attack Mecca, for demolishing the sacred house of worship, the Ka'ba. The invaders were so powerful that they did not fear opposition. In fact, there was no opposition at all for the Meccans were no match for Abraha, the Abbysinian Viceroy. But the Divine Power worked through the laws of nature, and it showed that the Power that calculates laws and designs their course, is greater than the mechanism through which it runs. God puts it in these words :

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الم ترکیف فعل ربك باصحاب الفیل - الم یجعل

کیدهم فی تضلیل - و ارسل علیهم طیراً ابابیل -

ترمیهم بحجارة من سجیل - فجعلهم کعصف ماکول.

"Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant. Did He not cause their plan to miscarry. And He sent against them swarms of birds which ate their carrion, striking them against stones of clay. And thus made them like broken straw, eaten up".

Evidently, the flying of birds and the blowing of the winds, was a natural phenomenon, but the course of nature, even in its absolute normal flow, was directed in such a way, that a double purpose was served. It fulfilled a divine mission, as it followed a natural course.

Nature designed for a double Purpose

It is now easy to realize that nature, as it appears to us, is not a mere collection of bare facts working under the laws of life, gravitation and relativity, it is this, plus something else, which is over and above it. Even such a materialist as Haeckel, recognises it and says :

"We do undeniably perceive a purpose in the structure and in the life of an organism. The plant and the animal seem to be controlled by a definite design in the combination of their several parts, just as clearly as we see in the

machines which man invents and constructs ; as long as life continues, the functions of the several organs are directed to definite ends just as the operation of the various parts of a machine. Hence it was quite natural that the older naive study of nature, in explaining the origin and activity of the living being should postulate a Creator, who had arranged all things with wisdom and understanding, and had constructed each plant and animal according to the special purpose of its life".[4]

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This contention proves that all objects in nature have a two-fold design : they serve the law of their own existence, and they also add to the glory of the entire design. Just as a flower in the orchard, fulfills the inherent law of its growth besides adding to the beauty of the garden, similarly an object in the Universe subserves its own inherent laws besides serving a useful purpose in the entire scheme of creation. It is silly to consider that an object in creation is a be-all, and an end-all in itself. Complete isolation is inconceivable. Even in the family life, we find a person, who is simultaneously a father, a son, and a brother at one and the some time. So is the case with the objects of creation. In fact, Einstein's theory of Relativity, apart from its material implications, refers to the family of growth, a network of mutual relations where it naturally grows and develops. In the Holy Quran, God Almighty says :-

يا ايها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذى خلقكم من نفس واحدة وخلق منها زوجها و بث منهما رجالا كثيراً ونساء واتقوا الله الذى تساءلون به والارحام ان الله كان عليكم رقيباً

"O ! ye people ! fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women, and fear Allah in whose name you appeal to one another and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily Allah watches over you".

This divine injunction points out that men, women, and the objects in the Universe have been created in *groups* and *relations* and they are assigned double purpose : the physiological

process of growth and subsistance depending on their kith and kin, and a spriritual purpose which demands an active realization of the ultimate goal to which their being is directed. The pity is that modern science, though tentatively recognises the dual purpose of the objects in creation, concentrates only on the mechanistic aspect of creation. Partly it should do so, for science mainly concerns with what can be judged and valued physically, but the scientist is expected to be broader in outlook and not to identify himself completely with one side of the picture.

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Nature itself is not almighty

With the progress of science, the impulse to control nature dominated the mind of the zealeous scientist. This drive ended in the form of downright materialism. People in the wake of scientific achievements, thought that whatever was around them was subject to physical subjugation, and it was only a matter of time when these objects were brought under the heels of man. Economic exploitation, political superiority, and national capitalism are some of the fruits of this unhampered drive of science.

Yet a contrary movement was also on foot. Pantheism, as the term goes, believes that God and nature are one. Some of the early philosophers especially Democritus, Heraclitius, and Empedocles, had, in the same, or an analogous sense, a profound conception of the unity of Nature and God. The famous Roman poet and philosopher, Lucretius Carus has presented it in a highly poetic form in his poem "De Rerum Nature". In our own times, the English poet Wordsworth, treated nature and Divinity almost on par. His poem "Tintern Abbey" is a fine presentation of the identity of Nature and God. Besides, the Stoics in the Ethical world believed that the pursuit of, and identity with, nature, was the main theme of the moral Ideal.

The pantheistic view is sharply opposed in principle to all forms of theism. In theism God is opposed to nature, as an extramundane being, as creating and sustaining the world, and acting upon it from without, while in pantheism God is an intramundane being, identical with nature, acting as a force or

an energy from within. His existence cannot be conceived apart from nature. All the attributes pertaining to God, and attributed to Him by religion, are discarded outright. The view is so extensive that according to Haeckel it has become the code of the modern scientist. He says :

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> "This god-less world-system substantially agrees with the monism or pantheism of the modern scientist. It is only another expression for it, emphasizing its negative aspect the non-existence of any supernatural deity. In this sense Schopenheur justly remarks : Pantheism is only a polite form of atheism". [5]

Pantheism, therefore, we can say, is a theorised form of religion for the scientist. But is the view tenable? Apart from the logical aspect of the question, we find that a peculiar pychological bias is working in the subconscious mind of the scientist. He feels that man emerged from ignorance, and set afoot to conquer what he considered invincible. He also knows that man was able to conquer a great part of what nature afforded to him. The scientist, therefore, on his own presumption, thinks, that as it was fear which impelled him to bow before the great natural forces, so it is fear, which still impels him to seek the supernatual aid to protect him against certain dangers whose causes are not yet known. He feels that as the 'causes' of the 'unknown' will be discovered, the fears will be shaken off, and together with it, will go the idea of worship.

This is the main theme of the argument, followed by thinkers like Bertrand Russell. 'Why I am not a Christian'? a book, which is almost a manifesto for the atheists, rests only on one argument, the argument of fear.

The Basis of worship.

As pointed out above, the western thinkers, under the influence of science, regard the feeling of worship as something based on fear. Bertrand Russell writes in his book 'Why I am not a Christian ?.'

> "Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear ; it is partly the terror of the unknown, and partly as I said, the wish to feel, that you

> have a kind of elder brother, who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing; fear of mysteries, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty and it is no wonder, if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand."[6]

In one breath, Russell speaks of many truths and untruths. It is a truth that Christianity in medieval times, did commit cruelties, and cruelties of the worst order. The Inquisition is still a testimony of terror. The wheel of torture is something which history abhors. These institutions were a part of the cruel mechanism of Christian faith.

But it is equally cruel to say that religion is based on fear. The idea of worship is a complex one, it is more a creation than an evolution. It is an evolution, because the instinct of love still reigns supreme in human nature and it is the instinct of love, which gives rise to the idea of worship. Love in baby tends him to his mother, and love in mother tends her to the baby. Doubtlessly, the baby wants protection, but it is not for the sake of protection alone that he goes to his mother. There may be a stronger person to protect the child, but the child is is not at home. He wants only his mother who is inherently bound to him in ties of love. The love element in the child is paramount.

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The same is the relation between man and God. In trials and tribulations, we do want a Being above all, to protect us, and when there are no trials, we want Him as an Object of love. It is, and can be, only One Being, Who is capable of protecting us, and at the same time, loving us. Difficulties will always be, even if, for argument's sake, we are able to conquer each item of nature. Imagine a scientist sitting at the top of a precipice with all physical powers at his disposal, with no fear of anything or any one. But is he free from worries? Or was any emperor free of all apprehensions? Can any person with the greatest mastery over his surroundings boast of an 'unworried' life. The scientist can best answer the question himself.

The Holy Quran abounds with the truth of this fundamental human instinct, the instinct of love towards his Creator:

وله ما فی السموات والارض وله الدین واصباً ـ افغیر الله تتقون ـ
وما بکم من نعمة فمن الله ثم اذا مسکم الضر فالیه تجرءون ثم اذا
کشف الضر عنکم اذا فریق منکم بربهم یشرکون

"And to Him belongs, whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and to Him is due obedience for ever. Will you then fear any other than Allah ; And whatever blessing you have, it is from Allah, and when affliction befalls you, it is unto Him that you cry for help.

Then when He removes the affliction from you, behold a party among you, begins to attribute equals to their Lord".[7]

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The above Quranic verse clarifies two things beyond doubt.

1. All that is in the heavens and earth is created and controlled by Almighty Himself.
2. It is Almighty who is also competent to remove affliction.

The Divine claim is perfectly logical. Only he who is completely in possession of a particular object, can look after the needs of that object. Then it is a fact, that we suffer afflictions ; we pass through hardships, trials and tribulations. If there is no God, and our nature is left devoid of any inner support or sustenance, we would be like a ship left unmanned in the stormy billows of the occean. It is silly to imagine that we have no inner call. And it is equally wrong to presume that our inner call is a 'heredity of descent'.

Neither of the above views is correct. The inner call is there. And the response to the inner call is also there. Both testify to the existence of a Being Whose power, love, and sustenance run through all objects of nature, and is the cause of their substance. Nature alone is not self-existent. All its aspects prove and point to a Being, Who is all-wise and all-conscious.

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(3) "The Universe : Plan or Accident"? by Robert Clark . 151"
(4) The Riddle of the Universe" pp. 213-214
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(6) "Why I am not a Christian?" by Bertrand Russell.
(7) 16 : 53 , 55

Religious Toleration in Islam

Sayyada Zohra Begum Hussain. M.A. B.T.

The idea of religious toleration exclusively owes its existence to Islam. Before the advent of Islam there was no religious toleration in the world. The great empires of the world—Byzantine and Persian—were under the agony of religious persecution. If we cast a cursory glance at history, we find that both in Byzantine and Sasanide empires, there was complete lack of religious liberty. Any group of people which differed from the religious ideas of the emperors, found it difficult to live under the government; for example, the Jews living in the Byzantine empire suffered great hardships and disabilities. Similarly Nestorians of Syria had to leave their country and settle down in Persia because there was no religious freedom.

In its essence, Islam was a revolt against Paganism and idol-worship. It insisted on the unity of God and the truth of all the revealed religions. This is a most fundamental aspect in the attitude of Muslims towards the followers of other Divine religions.

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The Quran says :

> "Say ye! we believe in God and in the Revelation given to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jocab and his children, what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to all other Prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between any of them and we bow to God in Islam. So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed in the right path". (2 : 137)

Let us for a moment glance back at history to see how this principle was applied. After the early persecution and hardships in Mecca, an organized Muslim Community of believers was formed in Medina and one of the first steps which the Prophet took after his arrival was to conclude a covenant with the three major communities of Medina, namely the refugees from Mecca,

the supporters from Medina and the Jews. It is important for our purpose here to stress the fact that religious freedom for non-Muslims was clearly emphasised in that first political covenant concluded by Islam. The Jews of Medina were perfectly free to obesver the laws of their religion. Their cases were judged according to their own laws and in matters on which the Quran was silent, the Prophet followed the laws of the Jews as far as possible. They had freedom to live according to their own customs and beliefs. Afterwards, they were expelled from Medina not because of their religious views but because they proved disloyal to the state. Similarly the Prophet gave a charter of freedom to the Christians of Najran assuring them of the safety of life, property and religion. Their churches were not to be destoryed; their bishops were not to be removed from of their offices no image or cross was to be destroyed and the decisions of their Church officers were not to be interfered with. By this charter the Prophet secured to the Christians privileges and immunities which they did not possess even under the rulers of their creed. Not only did the Prophet himself show toleration to the Chistians but also he enjoined on his followers to protect the Chistians and defend their churches, the residences of their priests and guard them from all injuries. They were not to be unfairly taxed. No pilgrim was to be obstructed from performing pilgrimage, nor were the Christian churches to be pulled down for the sake of building mosques and houses for the Muslims. Christian women who married with Muslims enjoyed their own religion and were not to be subjected to any compulsion or annoyance of any kind on that account. If the Christians were in need of assistance for the repair of the churches or monasteries or any other matter pertaining to religion, the Muslims were to assist them. Should the Muslims be engaged in hostilities with outside Christians, no Christian resident among the Muslims should be treated with contempt on account of his creed by the Muslims. Has any conquering race or faith ever given to its subject nationalities a better guarantee than is to be found in the words of the Prophet. The Quran has made it clear saying:

لا اكراه فى الدين ـ قد تبين الرشد من الغى فمن يكفر
بالطاغوت و يومن بالله فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى

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لا انفصام لها والله سميع عليم

"Let there be no compulsion in religion. Surely right has henceforth become distinct from error. And he who rejecteth vain superstitions and believeth in Allah, has grasped a firm handle which will not give way. God is All-hearing All-seeing." (2 : 257)

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This shows that it is by the will of God that the choice of religion is left to man. The Quran is so liberal in matters concerning religion that it mentions not only the mosque, the Muslims' place of worship, but also churches and synagogues of the Christians and Jews which is clear by the following verse :

ولو لا دفع الله الناس بعضهم ببعض لهدمت صوا مع

و بيع و مساجد

It means that "Had there not been God's repelling some people by others, there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered".

The significant thing here is that the houses of worship of Jews and Christians have been mentioned, along with the mosques. The Quran promises salvation not only to the Muslims but it also says :

"Those who believe, and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians whoever believes and does good works, need no fear nor sorrow".

Similarly the Quran calls the Jews and the Christians to come together on a common platform with the Muslims as it declares :

يا اهل الكتاب تعالوا الى كلمة سواء بيننا و بينكم

that is, 'O people of the Book let us come to a word equal between us and you." (3 : 65)

The attitude of the Quran is that people of all religions can co-operate together and work on a common platform if there

is agreement on broad fundamentals. The tolerant and liberal attitude of the Quran is also shown by the fact that although generally it condemns the Jews and the Christians, it does not hesitate to declare that there are good people among them who devote themselves to the worship of God.

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But still there is a very deep-rooted misconception that the Quran preaches intolerance and that Muhammad preached the faith with "the sword in one hand the Quran in the other." The basic principle of Islam, a faith in all the Prophets of the world is enough to give a lie to this allegation. The great and liberal mind that preached not only love and respect for the founders of the great religions of the world but much more than this is to have faith in them. Again intolerance could not be ascribed to a book which excludes compulsion from the sphere of religion altogether. The Holy Quran is full of statements showing that belief in this or that religion is a person's own concern. He is given the choice to adopt one way or another. If he accepts truth, it is for his own good and if he sticks to error, it is to his own detriment. I quote from the Quran here:

> "The truth is from your Lord, so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve."

The Muslims were allowed to fight indeed, but what was the object? Not to compel the non-believers to accept the cult of the Muslims for it was against all the broad principles of Islam. It was to establish religious freedom, to stop all religious persecution, to protect the houses of worship of all religions as the Quran bears testimony to it:

> "And fight with them until there is no more persecution and all religions should be for God."

Under what conditions was the permission given to the Muslims to fight with the non-believers? Every student of Islamic History knows that the Holy Prophet and his companions were subjected to severe persecutions as Islam began to gain ground at Mecca. Ultimately the Muslims had to take refuge in Medina, but they were not left alone even there, and the sword was taken up by the enemies to annihilate Islam and the Muslims altogether. The Quran says:

> "Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made, because they are oppressed, those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, 'Our Lord is God.'"

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The Prophet made treaties of peace with his enemies. One such treaty brought about the famous Truce of Hudaibiya. According to the treaty, if an unbeliever being converted to Islam went over to the Muslims he was to be returned, but if a Muslim went over to the unbelieves, he was not to be given back to the Muslims. This term of the treaty cuts at the root of all allegations of the use of force by the Holy Prophet. This condition to fight "with those who fight with you" remained in force to the last. The last expedition led by the Holy Prophet was the famous Tabuk Expedition and every historian of Islam knows that though the Prophet had marched a very long distance to Tabuk at the head of an army of 30,000 yet when he found that the enemies did not fulfil the condition laid down above, he returned and did not allow his troops to attack the enemy territory. The Quran allowed war only in defence without which the Muslims could not live. It clearly forbade aggressive wars. The waging of war on non-believers to compel them to accept Islam is a lie pure and simple, a thing unknown to the Holy Quran. It was the enemy that waged war on the Muslims to turn them away from their religion as the Holy Book clearly asserts :

> "And they will not cease fighthing with you until they turn you back from your religion if they can."

The history of Spain is a clear witness to prove this Quranic verse. When the Muslims entered Spain, they found Catholic Christianity firmly established after its conquest over Arianism. The sixth council of Toledo had exacted that all kings were to swear that they would not suffer the exercise of any other religion but the Catholic. Any one who would retain his own religion, would be under pain of confiscation of property and perpetual imprisionment. The clergy who had an immense influence in the affairs of state took advantage of their power to persecute the Jews

who formed a very large community in Spain. Edicts of a brutally severe character were passed against such as refused to be baptised. As a result these Jews hailed the invading Arabs as their deliverers from such cruel oppressions and opened the gates of their towns. Of forced conversions or any thing like persecution in the early days of Arab conquest, we hear nothing. Indeed, it was probably in great measure their tolerant attitude towards the non-Muslims that facilitated their rapid acquisition of the country. Except in cases of offences against the Muslim religious laws, the Christians were tried by their own judges and in accordance with their own laws. They were left undisturbed in the exercise of their religion. The sacrifice of the mass was offered with the swinging of the censers, the ringing of the bell, sermons were preached to the people. Festivals of the Church were observed in the usual manner. We read also of founding several fresh monastries and numerous convents both for monks and nuns that flourished undisturbed by the Muhammadan rulers. The Priest had no need to conceal the mark of his sacred office. This religious profession never prevented the Christians from being entrusted with high offices at court or serving in the Muslim armies. In Spain the non Muslim citizens of all denominations lived in perfect freedom. This is clearly stated and proved by recent Christian authors such as Adam, Stanley Lane Poole and Thomas Arnold.

Now we compare the conduct of the Christian Crusaders with that of the Muslims with regard to force in religion. When Omar the Caliph of Islam took Jerusalem, at the hour of prayer, instead of praying in the church he prayed on the steps of the Church of Constantine for, he said to the Patriarch :

> "Had I done so, the Musalmans of the future might have infringed the treaty, imitating my example."

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But in the capture of the crusaders, the brains of the young children were dashed out against the walls, infants were pilched over the battlements : men were roasted at fires. The Jews were driven into their synagogues and were burnt alive. A massacre of 70,000 persons took place on account of delay on the payment of ransom. When Saladin recaptured the city, he released all Christians, gave them money and food and allowed them to depart

with a safe conduct.

One very important historical record in this regard is the dooument written by the Caliph Omar in the seventh century conferring on the people of Jerusalem peace and safety. It runs thus:

> "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is a covenant of security which Omar, the servant of God and the Commander of the Faithful, has given to the people of IIlia. (Jerusalem). He gave them guarantee in their persons, properties, churches and crosses, to their sick and healthy and all; that their churches should not be occupied nor demolished. This is all guaranteed by the covenant of God, the covenant of His Apostle, the covenant of the Caliph and the covenant of all the believers, provided the people of Illia paid the tax".

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When Islam expanded and spread its influence over Byzantine and Persian territories, it defined its policy towards the conquered people. They could join the new faith and have the same rights and obligations as the Muslims. If they wished to keep to their religion, they could do so in perfect freedom, provided they paid a kind of defence tax in the name of Jaziya to help in the maintainance and organization of the state. If neither of these alternatives was chosen, the Dhimmies would be looked up as enemies of the state. This was consistantly and officially followed all through the period of spread and expansion for the Document of Caliph Omar is a clear proof as mentioned above. It is sometimes asserted that the Quran forbids the relationship with the followers of other religions. How could a book which allows a man to have his comrade in life a woman following other religion, to give such an injunction that no friendly relations can be had with the followers of other religions. The loving relation of husband and wife is the friendliest of all relations and when this is permitted, there is not the least reason to suppose that other friendly relations are forbidden. The fact is that wherever there is prohibition against making friends with other

people, it relates only to the people who were at war with the Muslims and this is plainly stated in the Quran.

Another widely prevailing misconception is that the Quran provides a death sentence for those who desert the religion of Islam. Any one who takes the trouble to read the Quran, will see that there is not the least ground for such a supposition. The Quran speaks repeatedly of people going back to unbelief after believing but never once does it say that they should be killed or punished as the Quran says:

> "O you who blieve! should one of you turn back from his religion, then God will bring a people whom He shall love and they too shall love Him."

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History bears ample proof to show the tolerant attitude of the great Muslims towards non-Muslims. We cannot help placing here some of the examples of religious toleration by the Muslims towards the non-Muslims as expressed by their own co-religionists. In the reign of Uthman the Christian Patriarch of Merv addressed the bishop of Fars in the following terms :

> "The Arabs who have been given by God the kingdom do not attack Christian faith. On the contrary, they keep us in our religion. They respect our God, and our saints and bestow gifts on our churches and monasteries".

When the Muslim army reached the valley of Jordan, and Abu Ubayda pitched his camp at Fihb, the Christian inhabitants of the country wrote to the Arabs:

> "O Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantine, though they are of our own faith, because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful and refrain from doing us injustice. Your rule over us is better than theirs, for they have robbed us of our goods, and our homes".

We even read of a Muslim general in the reign of Mu'tasim,

who ordered an Imam and muazzin to be flogged because they had desroyed a fire-temple in Sughd and built a mosque in its place. In the tenth cen ury, three centuries after the conquest of the country, fire-temples were to be found in Iraq, Fars, Kirman and Adharbaijan in Persia. Even the great European writer, Dozy, never hesitated in praising the Muslim conquerors of Spain. He wirtes :

"In fact the Arab conquest was even a benefit to Spain".

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If we reveiw the position of the non-Muslims under the Islamic government, we find that they enjoyed a position of respected dignity in the Islamic country. Hazrat Omar issued instructions that the Christians and the Jews who were very poor, should be helped from the Muslim treasury. It is time that the non-Muslims had to pay Jaziya because they were free from the obligations to fight for Islam but this tax was taken only from the fighting males, while women, children, monks and the very poor people were exempted. It was also laid down that no force should be applied for the collection of Jaziya. Only punishment which could be given for the non-payment of Jaziya was detention.

In Syria, there were few places of worship which were equally shared both by the Christians and the Muslims. The father of John of Damascus was a trusted adviser, under the Ummayyads who were very liberal to the Christians, specially Muawiyya. Christians, Persians and the Jews almost monopolized the revenue department. Trade and commerce were in the hands of non-Muslims.

During the Abbaside rule, the Christians occupied very high positions, for example, the family of Bakhtshu were the court physicians to the early Abbasides. Many of the translators of Baitul Hikmat were Christians, such as, Hunain bin Ishaq, Qista bin Lauqa ; Sabith bin Qurrah was a Sabean. His son Siran bin Sabith was employed by the Caliph Muqtadir to carry out the registration of the physicians of Baghdad. In the Abbaside empire, the position of the Christians was so respectable that the head of the Church received a letter of appointment from the caliph and he was invested with civil and religious powers

over all Christians living in the state. Similarly the chief of the Jews called Roshqulatha, was addressed with *Sayadna* (our Lord). Both of them occupied very high positions in the caliph's court. If a Muslim killed a Christian or a Jew he could be sentenced to death. Christians and the Jews had their civil courts, and they were not compelled to appear in the Muslim courts unless they were involved in a dispute with a Muslim.

Under the Fatmids, the Jews and the Christians received very favourable treatment. The minister of the Fatmid Caliph, Aziz was a Christian, Isa bin Nastur, and his representative in Syria was a Jew, Mivasa, by name. The Jews and the Christians were well represented in the service of the government. In Medical profession and banking, the Jews and the Christians had occupied very enviable positions.

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Thus there are hundreds and thousands of examples of toleration which the Muslims showed towards other religions for which we cannot overlook the clear pages of history. It was the humility, kindness, and sympathy which enabled the Muslims to propagate Islam East and West and to contribute to the great expansion of the Muslim empire. But woe to the critics who think that force was one of the powerful implements in the hands of the Muslims in spreading Islam. No religion on earth can compare with the religion of Islam as regards religious toleration and for that it deserves the gratitude of humanity.

Consider this Day

Saleman-al-Hadi

In the Name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

1. Consider the times.
2. Surely mankind is in a state of loss,
3. Excepting those who work deeds of righteousness,
4. And enjoin on others truth,
5. And enjoin on others patience. (Al-Asar the Holy Quran)

Almighty God, out of His infinite Wisdom has issued man a warning against the latter days and its perils. Gracious is He Who has provided in His Word, the Holy Quran, the means whereby man may recognize the disease that would befall him in these times and at the same time adequately protect himself from its tentacles of destruction.

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In the first line of this revelation we are told to consider the times. Immediately following is stated that mankind is in a state of loss. Careful consideration would verify, beyond a doubt, that the verses of this chapter apply to this very day and age.

Nations of the earth are inventing weapons of destruction and are shouting slogans of death and fire! The champions of satan, the materialistic giants of Communism on the one hand, and of Capitalism on the other are threatening to annihilate humanity! The developement of nuclear warheads are no longer a remote danger. The constant increase of scientific discoveries in this field are lending new proportions to this danger. Never before in the history of the world has man been so close to total destruction! The coming of automaton has accelerated the pace of industrialization in this direction.

Man, in his blind pride, has utterly forsaken the paths of reason. In his speedy materialistic plight, he has either forgotten or is not aware of the basic purpose of his existence. He has overlooked the heavenly signs that are the very foundation of his being. He is rushing headlong towards self-extinction. Through

his misdirected zeal, man is concentrating all his efforts on materialistic pursuits; some at the expense of humanity! The light of reason is fast giving way to the dictates of animalistic and savage promptings.

What can he hope to accomlish? Prestige? Pleasure? Riches? Be it known that the worldy pleasures are only illusions. All that is here is transitory for him. It was here when he was born into it and will be here when, in death, he departs from it.

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The Holy Quran clearly states, Almighty God and those of His righteous servants who have persevered will be the inheritors. Even the Scriptures, prior to the revelation of the Holy Quran, proclaim the fact that the meek shall inherit the earth. However, mankind has chosen to ignore innovations in the revelations and are blindly trying to disprove authenticity of them. Even the actual existence of God!

In truth the very idea of inheritance indicates that there is nothing new and that all things pass from one hand to another in an unending process. The beginning of which was God. The ending of which is God. Thus mankind is in constant state of loss, materially. Being ignorant of this fact and its persistence in trying to invalidate divine law subjugates it to a spiritual loss as well. This, Oh people, is the loss of the greatest value. This loss is the loss of purpose. In this age, as never before. growth of material obsession has overtaken man. Moral concepts which should be the guiding force in life have become a degrading force!

There is no need, at this point, to begin to enumerate the immoralities that have been introduced and nourished with the rise of present day society. That would require a chapter exclusively its own.

Man's purpose is noble. Allah says in the Holy Quran: He created man that he should worship Him. (Chpt. 51, V:57) When man allows himself to become blinded to this purpose, it is indeed a sign that the time of judgement is near at hand. Consider this day, Oh people. It is in keeping with divine law that every thousand years the creation goes through a major change in its developement. That is to say God showers His Mercy

and cleanses, by removing the corrupt elements that are cancerous in growth, and permits only the pure to remain. Allah has promised when this time arrives, He would make it manifest to mankind through divine signs. Those who are the righteous people would become the inheritors of the "New world Order".

Defining the righteous the Holy Word of God plainly describes such people. It states the righteous are those who believe in Allah and His prophets, who obey the divine laws, who utillize the gifts granted them through God's Bounty and Grace. By doing, these things, those people would be performing deeds of righteousness. The chosen ones of Allah would exalt Him and his prophets to those who are not aware so that they, too, might share in the blessings. Not only should exaltation be verbal, but also practised. Their lives being examples of truth. Man being impatient, the righteous should exhort men to be patient. The Quran explicitly states the promise of Allah is true. If we hope for the fulfilment of our Lord's promise, we must be steadfast and patient.

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There are many who claim to be in this category but few meet the requirements. It is necessary, therefore, that God Almighty distinguishes the true believers from those who pretend. It is for this purpose He raised in the image of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (on him be peace) in this age, a prophet who is his perfect follower, one who would dictate from His word, under His guidance to attain qualities which place one in the category of *Al Mumineen* (the believers). The believers are those who recognize the guide of the age and without hesitation follow his advice that would mould them into Al Saliheen or the righteous. These are they who walk the earth in humility and love. Their faith has been strengthened by the new rain from heaven — revelation. Within their sight is the reward promised to the believer.

The messenger of the age is come and heaven and earth bear testimony to the truth of his claim. In him is fulfilled the advent of all the prophets before him.

He has come with a song of praise upon his lips for Allah, the Creator, and His Master Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him and the Mercy of God. He has come with truth

adequate to protect the servants of Allah against the hazards of this day of manifest loss. All praise is due to Allah Who has sent His messenger, Muhammad, on whom be peace, the sun of the spiritual universe and Ahmad of Qadian, may Allah be pleased with him, the moon and reflector, with the religion of truth and peace—Islam. May it prevail over all religions and spread throughout the world. Amen!

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Book Reviews

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The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa

Translated and annotated by Garma C. C. Chang. Oriental Studies Foundation, and University Books Inc. New York, Vol. 2, pp. 730.

Although Tibetan Buddhism is nothing but a branch of the Mahayana Buddhist School of thought but from its nature it is altogether different from all Mahayana Buddhism prevelant in other countries of the world. We may call it a new form of Buddhism which is a product of the admixture of Buddhism and the various religious thoughts and customs of Tibet such as Bon and Shamanism. Although Tibetan Buddhism is only nominally and loosely connected with the genuine teachings of Buddhim, but it attaches an unusual importance and allots a central position to the great personality of Gotama the Buddha.

The Mahayana Buddhism of Tibet is further divided into various denominations and one of them is known as Tantraism which is well-known for its Yogic and Vairagic ways of life. One such Yogi or Vairagi was born in 1052 A.D. and died in 1135 A.D. He was also a poet of no mean repute. It is reported of him that he always conversed in poetic strains. It is said that he composed no less than one hundred thousand songs which is, however, highly improbable. A collection of his religious poems called *Wila Grubum* existed in Tibet from very early times, a collection which enjoys the reputation of being his masterpiece and the most favourite book with the Tibetans. The author-poet besides giving spiritual experiences of his own, lays down many instructions to beginners in Yoga concerning their practical difficulties in spiritualism.

The book under review is an English translation of the same collection of Milarepa's poems and is named "The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa". It has been published by the University Books Inc. for the Oriental Studies Fundation in two volumes. From beginning to end the book deals with celebacy which is another name for man's fleeing from the responsibilities of life and for which there

is no room in Islam. But the utility of the book cannot be underestimated for its study is indispensable for the study of Tibetan religious thought and the natural inclinations of Tibetans, particularly for those who are interested in the detailed study of Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet.

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It is the second book on the life of Milarepa which has seen the light of day through an English translation. The Oxford University Press published the first book in 1951 under the title "Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa", which treats of the life-history and exploits of the Buddhist Saint. We are of the opinon that the study of the first book will be a great help to that of the second. The book under review has been rendered into English by a well-known Buddhist scholar Garma C. C. Chang who has taken special care to explain Tibetan words, technical terms and other references so that the study of the book has been made much easier for English-knowing scholars.

M. A.

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